

PATENTS

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

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|-------------------|----------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Applicant: | Katsumi Sasaki | Examiner: | Unassigned |
| Serial No: | To be assigned | Art Unit: | Unassigned |
| Filed: | Herewith | Docket: | 15174 |
| For: | SURGICAL OPERATION INSTRUMENT | Dated: | December 21, 2001 |



Assistant Commissioner for Patents
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Washington, D.C. 20231

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INFORMATION DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

Sir:

In accordance with 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.97 and 1.98, it is requested that the following references, which are also listed on the attached Form PTO-1449, be made of record in the above-identified case.

1. U.S. Patent No. 5,350,391, dated September 27, 1994, issued to Iacovelli;
2. U.S. Patent No. 5,520,678, dated May 28, 1996, issued to Hecke et al.;
3. U.S. Patent No. 5,314,445, dated May 24, 1994, issued to Heidmueller Née Degwitz et al.;

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I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service "Express Mail Post Office to Addressee" service under 37 C.F.R. § 1.10 on the date indicated above and is addressed to the Assistant Commissioner for Patents and Trademarks, Washington, D.C. 20231 on December 21, 2001.

Dated: December 21, 2001

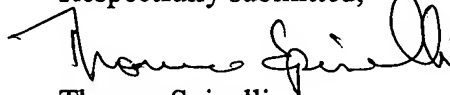

Mishelle Mustafa

4. U.S. Patent No. 5,275,608, dated January 4, 1994, issued to Forman et al.;
and
5. U.S. Patent No. 5,908,436, dated June 1, 1999, issued to Cuschieri et al.;

References 1-4 were cited in a Search Report received from the Japanese Patent Office dated May 22, 2001. Reference 5 is cited in the specification. Applicant is submitting copies of the above-cited references, together with a copy of the Search Report. The relevance of references 1-4 has been described in the Search Report.

Inasmuch as this Information Disclosure Statement is being submitted in accordance with the schedule set out in 37 C.F.R. § 1.97(b), no statement or fee is required.

Respectfully submitted,



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